



## U.S. Forest Service Northern Region News

JUNE 29, 2011



### **Chief Discusses Top Priorities at Missoula Aerial Fire Depot**

More than 200 Missoula-area employees filed into the Aerial Fire Depot hangar to hear Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell discuss his five focus areas, May 31. For the Chief, it was his first official visit since leaving his job here as Regional Forester.

### **Secretary Vilsack: USDA Takes Lead on Feds Feed Families Campaign**

Today I am excited to announce that USDA is partnering with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for the 3rd annual Feds Feed Families Food Drive.

### **New Bitterroot Interp Area Honors Doris Milner, Sen. Frank Church**

Even threatening gray skies and constant drizzle couldn't stop more than 70 people from gathering on June 18th in Montana's Bitterroot National Forest to dedicate a new interpretive area honoring wilderness advocate and volunteer Doris Milner and late Idaho Sen. Frank Church.

### **Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center: Gone to the Dog**

To celebrate its 13th anniversary this year, the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center in Great Falls, Montana, has gone to the dog – one dog in particular that served as an integral part of the Lewis & Clark expedition more than 200 years ago.

### **R1 Employees**

**Gallatin Forest Protection**

**Officer Receives National Award**

**Faces of the Region: Robin Boyd**

**In Memoriam: James "Jim"**

**Crockett**

**Length of Service Awards-RO**

**Beaverhead-Deerlodge Selects**

**New Employees**

### **In other news**

*Gallatin Avalanche Center receives Chief's Safety Group Award*

*Region Engages in Safety Catalyst and Cadre Pilot*

*ND Geological Survey Earns Partner Award*

*Watershed Condition Framework Rolls Out Across Nation*

*Northern Rockies Montessori Offers Childcare for Missoula-area Employees*

*Region Takes On Master Agreement, Positive Work Environment Training*

*Update from the 2011 Montana Legislature*

*R1/RMRS Team Earns Top Spot in Commuter Challenge*

*Employees to be Surveyed on Workplace Satisfaction*

---

**Grand Opening of Newly Renovated Lake Como Group Site**

---

More than 50 people attended the "grand opening" of the newly renovated Three Sisters Group Site at Lake Como on the Bitterroot National Forest, May 21, 2011.

---

---

**Backcountry Cooking Basics Taught at Ninemile Training Center**

---

If you love camping but avoid it because the only meals you ever eat are charred hot dogs, you've probably never taken one of Colleen Sloan's cooking classes.

---

---

**Gallatin National Forest Focuses on Clean Water – One Road at a Time**

---

The Gallatin National Forest's 2006 Travel Plan brought with it an intense focus on road decommissioning to address excess road and water quality concerns.

---

---

**Northern Region Pack Train Enters Year 23 of Service**

---

2011 marks the twenty-third year that the U.S. Forest Service Northern Region pack string will continue their work hauling freight in and out of wilderness, educating "Leave No Trace" wilderness management to the backcountry horse and stock communities, and representing the agency's mission and objectives at shows, expositions, and other events seen by nearly 100,000 people.

---

---

**Back Country Horsemen Teach Free Wilderness Skills Weekend**

---

The Bitterroot Back Country Horsemen (BBCH) held their first-ever spring Wilderness Skills Weekend on May 21-22, at Charles Waters Campground on the Bitterroot National Forest.

---

---

**Local Partner's Efforts Lead to National Recognition**

---

Working in cooperation with the Lolo National Forest and the Northern Region Headquarters, two Trout Unlimited employees pulled together funding and support for top priority abandoned mine projects along with restoration-focused projects.

---

---

**NRU Forum Explores Weathering Transition and Triumphant**

---

Forest Service employees from around the Northern Region descended upon Missoula, Mont., and the University of Montana campus to attend Northern Region Univesity, an annual weeklong training event, that was held April 4-8.

---

---

**June Marks 10-year Anniversary for Accessible Electronic Information**

---

Tuesday, June 21, 2011, marked the ten-year anniversary of the Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973). Section 508 requires federal agencies' electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with disabilities.

*National Museum of Forest Service  
History Coming to Missoula*

*Forest Service 2012 Reunion  
Update*

*Past, Present Lolo Forest Employee  
Rendezvous*

*2nd Annual Photo Unit Challenge*

---

**Be A Part of the News**

*Send Us Your Ideas, Suggestions,  
and Feedback*

**NRN Archives**

*Spring 2011*

*2004 - 2008*

## Chief Discusses Top Priorities at Missoula AFD

---

By Brandan Schulze

More than 200 Missoula-area employees filed into the Aerial Fire Depot hangar to hear Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell discuss his five focus areas, May 31. For the Chief, it was his first official visit since leaving his job here as Regional Forester before moving to Washington D.C.



Tidwell began by expressing his appreciation for the tremendous amount of work the Forest Service has accomplished recently. Although the agency took on an additional assignment of \$1.15 billion worth of work on top of its normal program of work, he said he still hears a criticism that not enough is being accomplished. He attributed the criticism to the passion of employees' work ethic and the recognition of the enormity of the responsibilities they face.

"No matter what our budgets have been, no matter what our budgets will be in the future, I can guarantee that we will never be done. There will always be work that needs to be done," said Tidwell. "I want you to really feel good about what we are getting done and I want us to focus more about what we are getting accomplished and worry a little bit less about what we're not getting done."

In late December, Chief Tidwell sent out an all-employee memo discussing his five emphasis areas, and he elaborated on them during his discussion with Missoula employees.

### **Safety**

"I want us to become an organization where we are now a zero fatality organization," said Tidwell. "I can tell you if I didn't believe we could do this, I wouldn't stand in front of you today and tell you that this is where we're going to go."

He accounted for his position by explaining that throughout his career every single one of the accidents where he was involved on the investigation team – there was always one thing in the series of events that led up to accident. Had that one thing in the series of events changed – that accident could have been prevented.

"Whenever we do have an accident or whenever we do have a near miss, we've got to be okay to learn about it and learn about it in a way that you don't have to worry about getting in trouble, it's not a blame game, it's to find out what happened."

One of the things that we're doing this year is that every one of you will have a chance to participate in a Safety Engagement Session this year.

"You're going to hear that all of us have a responsibility to say "No," said Tidwell. "You have a responsibility to stop, talk about it with your supervisor to the point where you feel that the risks have been addressed to the point that you feel you can safely accomplish the mission. If that doesn't happen, then you have the responsibility to not do it."

### **Inclusiveness**

"When I talk about inclusiveness, for me it's basically that we are an organization where everyone is welcome – everyone is treated fairly," said Tidwell.

He elaborated on his vision of inclusiveness by recognizing what he described as a "diversity of thought" that comes along ensuring employees are valued for who they are, making sure everyone feels welcome in a positive work environment, and making sure everyone has an opportunity to succeed.

"As you go about your work day in and day out, the thing that I ask all of us to do is to make sure that we're going about our days making sure that we're providing a positive work environment; a place where you want to work and a place that you would want your friends to come work."

### **Restoration**

Chief Tidwell expressed excitement over the agency's commitment to restoration and the collaborative efforts that are going on in the region and all over the country.

"It's what we're going to continue to be focused on," he said. "It's a place where there are more and more people that are lining up to be part of this. It's why I believe that our collaborative efforts are so successful where people can come together, reach agreement on the level of restoration that needs to be done in order to restore these systems, and we're able to go to work."

Through these collaborative restoration efforts, he discussed recent developments surrounding the potential for large scale environmental assessments, areas more than 100 to 1,000 times larger than average.

"A group of folks that have come together and they want the Forest Service to do one environmental assessment for 750,000 acres," said Tidwell. "This is a group of folks that many of them used to spend a lot of time suing us over the type of work that we were proposing. They now want to come together and they believe that we can now look at these much larger areas and after we do the first

EIS (environmental impact statement) for 750,000 acres, they want the next one to be 1.5 million acres.”

## **Fire**

The Northern Region is the leader in being able to use fire for resource benefits. Chief Tidwell said he was going to help make that more of an emphasis around the country.

One statistic many may not be aware of is the success rate on every fire the Forest Service takes on initial attack. Tidwell said that rate was around 98 to 99 percent.



Speaking directly to some of the newest smokejumpers sitting in the front row he said, “That’s how good we are. That’s how good you guys are about this work that we do. ”

“Our key focus is always going to be on safety,” said Tidwell. “On those few that we’re not able to catch for a variety of reasons, we’re going to do even a better job to use the science and the knowledge and the expertise that we have to make the right decisions so that we can be effective with suppression and when we cannot be effective we’re not going to engage.”

He said that we need to continue to do better in supporting counties and states in helping to build and develop communities that can withstand and survive a wildfire.

## **Community**

Tidwell wrapped up his five focus points by talking about staying connected with local communities and helping to reconnect people to the National Forests and Grasslands. These communities often rely on the economic benefits that the National Forest System provides.

He said recreation alone provides the largest contribution to the gross national product. A recent estimate listed that contribution at about \$13 billion.

“That’s how important these lands are to these communities,” said Tidwell. “We need to be able to recognize that and continue to find ways to be able to expand these economic opportunities.”

## **Conclusion**

After speaking for about 45 minutes, Tidwell wrapped up his discussion with employees before taking questions from the group.

"Those are my five focus points," he said. "Those are the things that as I go about my work every day, no matter what I am having to deal with, if I can always stay connected to those five things and find a way that whatever I am dealing with kind of goes back to one of those focus areas, I feel that we're on the right course and I actually feel good about what I am working on."

For more photos from the visit with Chief Tidwell, visit the Northern Region Flickr page at **<http://www.flickr.com/photos/fsnorthernregion/sets/72157626854316192>**

## **Secretary Vilsack: USDA Leads Feds Feed Families campaign**

---

From USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack (released June 1, 2011):



Today I am excited to announce that USDA is partnering with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Feds Feed Families Food Drive. These are tough times for too many Americans, some of whom have been especially hard hit by natural disasters in the past weeks and months. And we need to do our part.

Even with the support and assistance USDA offers tens of millions of Americans every day, for nearly one in six Americans, hunger is a reality. And while many children and families are looking forward to summer break, we know all too well that hunger does not take a vacation. When the final school bell rings for the summer, our nation's children who receive free and reduced price meals through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs are at a higher risk of going hungry. USDA's Summer Food Service Program helps fill that gap, but it can't reach everyone who is hungry. Millions of Americans across the country turn to food banks and food pantries for emergency food assistance over the summer, and these organizations typically see increased demand coupled with a decrease in donations. But USDA employees can help.

As they say, when the going gets tough, the tough get going, and I know first-hand how tough, hard-working, and compassionate USDA employees are. Last year, the federal workforce far exceeded the Feds Feed Families campaign goal of 1.2 million pounds of food with donations of 1.7 million pounds to food banks and pantries across the nation. I am very proud that USDA led the pack, donating roughly 465,000 pounds of perishable and non-perishable food, including over 90,000 pounds of fresh produce grown at People's Gardens across the country.

This year, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has set a goal for the federal workforce of 2 million pounds of food. The USDA goal has been set at nearly 500,000 pounds, including 100,000 pounds of fresh produce from our People's Gardens initiative. I am confident that we will meet this goal. In fact, if every USDA employee donates just one 15 oz. can of food per week this summer, we will far exceed it.

In the National Capital region, there will be collection boxes available at convenient locations in your workplace for those who wish to donate. Employees in the field can participate in this effort by donating to your local food bank; and in the near future, we will be distributing a resource guide with

more information on how to help organize the food drive in your office. No matter where you are, contributing to a centralized food bank helps feed families in our communities in this difficult time.

But this food drive is just another way in which USDA employees work together to improve our communities. In addition to donating healthful food, you could also volunteer your time to groups in your community working to feed our hungry neighbors. If you need further assistance in learning how to be a part of this campaign, each USDA Agency has a captain for this effort, or you can contact [collaborate@usda.gov](mailto:collaborate@usda.gov).

This summer, I hope you will support the Feds Feed Families drive as USDA recognizes the realities of hunger in our own nation, as well as the important role our nation's farmers play in supplying a healthy and abundant source of food for our country and the world.

This morning, members of USDA's Sub-Cabinet brought in some of the first donations to the 2011 Feds Feed Families food drive, and I will be contributing later this week. I encourage you to join in this effort by bringing a healthy canned food item or some fresh produce to donate to your office this week. Thanks in advance for your participation.



## New interpretive area honors Doris Milner and Idaho Senator Frank

---

By Tod McKay

Even threatening gray skies and constant drizzle couldn't stop more than 70 people from gathering on June 18<sup>th</sup> in Montana's Bitterroot National Forest to dedicate a new interpretive area honoring wilderness advocate and volunteer Doris Milner and the late Idaho Sen. Frank Church.

The ceremony occurred at the top of Nez Perce Pass at 7,000 feet straddling Idaho and Montana, overlooking the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Areas.

Milner, a Montana housewife who got angry when she stumbled upon a bulldozer in a favorite place near the Selway-Bitterroot boundary, made it her business to save the area she loved from logging roads and development.

She told NPR's Elizabeth Arnold in a news story on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act, "All I knew was I mad and I was going to do something about it."

What she did was help permanently protect 1.3 million acres of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, the Selway River and particularly the Magruder Corridor for future generations to enjoy. The new interpretive area includes three signs telling the stories of Milner and Sen. Church and also a detailed map of the area.

To learn more about Doris Milner and hear her describe her passion and love for wilderness visit, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=3885261>.

More photos are available on the Northern Region Flickr site. Visit, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/fsnorthernregion/collections/72157624486039218/>



## Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center: Gone to the Dog

---

By Phil Sammon

To celebrate its 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center in Great Falls, Montana, has gone to the dog – one dog in particular that served as an integral part of the Lewis & Clark expedition more than 200 years ago.

The Center historically interprets the importance and relevance of the expedition that opened up the western portion of the growing United States to other exploration and expansion. It is part of the Lewis & Clark National Forest.



Seaman, a Newfoundland dog who accompanied the group, belonged to Meriwether Lewis, who chose the breed because of its calm and docile demeanor as well as its imposing size, according to historic literature. Many of the dog's exploits were documented in journals of the expedition. Some American Indians thought the expedition was accompanied by a trained bear because of the dog's size. Seaman was also an accomplished hunter for the expedition, killing squirrels along the trip, and once bringing down an antelope in the Missouri River.



The life-sized statue was donated by a patron of the Center, and is one of the last sculptures done by renowned wildlife artist and sculptor Joe Halko. The statue was displayed in the front of the center for the celebration and unveiling, but will be on permanent display on a lower level, overlooking the Missouri River.

Newfoundlands have a natural instinct for water and are known worldwide as water rescue dogs. Accounts of people saved by newfies are legendary among the breed's enthusiasts and with animal historians. Among the more famous of these was Rigel, a Newfoundland who belonged to an officer aboard the *Titanic* when she sank. The officer went down with the ship, but Rigel swam in the frigid waters for 3 hours next to a lifeboat filled with weary survivors. His resounding barks warned the approaching ship *Carpathia* of the presence of survivors. He was subsequently adopted by a crewmember aboard the *Carpathia*.

All along the route that the Lewis & Clark expedition travelled, visitors to many information and interpretive sites can find different statues of Seaman the Newfoundland on display.

## Grand Opening of Newly Renovated Lake Como Group Site

---

By Tod McKay

More than 50 people attended the “grand opening” of the newly renovated Three Sisters Group Site at Lake Como on the Bitterroot National Forest on Saturday, May 21st.

Forest Supervisor Julie King, along with local dignitaries and elected officials cut a ribbon to officially open the site, closed last fall for major renovations. New additions include a beautiful wood pavilion, restrooms, picnic tables, group fire ring, additional parking and more.



The site which can accommodate larger groups (up to 75 people) was named by the public in a contest. Along with their entries, each person had to submit 2-3 sentences describing why their name was the perfect choice for the site. The winner received a 2011 season pass good for free entrance to the Recreation Area.

The project was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The Lake Como Recreation Area is the most utilized recreation site in the entire Northern Rockies Region of the Forest Service visited by more than 100,000 people annually.

## Backcountry Cooking Basics Taught at Ninemile Training Center

---

By Brandan Schulze

If you love camping, but avoid it because the only meals you ever eat are charred hot dogs, then you've probably never taken one of Colleen Sloan's cooking classes.

Before the class introductions even started, those taking the course were greeted with a breakfast of pancakes and sausages cooked with the materials they would spend the day learning about.



"You gotta learn to cook, because kissin' wears out," Sloan says. "But cookin' don't!"

Just a few words of wisdom coming from the 72-year-old Utah-native to her 22 students at the Dutch Oven Cooking Basics course at the Ninemile Wildlands Training Center in Huson, Mont.

Not only does Sloan teach the basics of Dutch oven cooking during the class, she also provides meals throughout the day along with the history behind the versatile cast-iron pots. Students came from as far as Canada, northern Idaho and eastern Montana to learn the fundamentals of campfire cooking.



The Dutch oven is a versatile piece of cookware, but so are the methods you can use them cook. You can use a Dutch oven over an open flame, bury it in a fire pit, using charcoals for heat, or in your oven at home. Dutch ovens can be used to cook stews, bake bread, or make desserts. The lids of the pots can even be flipped over for use as a frying pan.

Because of the versatility, Sloan says that it's uncommon for students to get standardized instruction on how to use the Dutch oven.

She says moisture is the key to good food, which also happens to be the key to why Dutch oven cooking can be so tasty. The moisture stays in the pot until the food is ready. When the vapor vents through the space between the lid and the pot, the wonderful smell that is released lets you know your meal is finished cooking.

She warns there is a common myth that your Dutch oven needs to have a tight lid. That is not the case. The moisture needs to be able to vent.

In addition to the cooking basics Sloan also offers her knowledge as a self-proclaimed history buff, her advocacy for Leave No Trace principles, and encourages the use of vinegar to the point one might wonder if she owns stock in it.

Among other things she uses vinegar as a disinfectant, meat tenderizer, appetite suppressant, and for cleaning dirty dishes. Sloan even swears that a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar a day keeps the arthritis at bay.

Every aspect of the course brought rave reviews from the students.

"The Dutch Oven cooking class was a real learning experience. I really enjoyed Colleen's way of teaching. What a unique person she is!" said Dawn Huff, who traveled from Kingston, Idaho, to take the course. "The Ninemile Station was a wonderful setting, and I enjoyed everything about it. With the food and the beauty that surrounded the area, it was like a moment of 'heaven on earth.'"



With so many uses for a Dutch oven and so many possibilities for meals, Sloan encourages everyone to learn through trial and error.

"Don't be afraid to experiment; even mistakes taste good in a Dutch oven."



## **Gallatin National Forest Focuses on Clean Water – One Road at a Time**

---

By Mark Story and Marna Daley

The Gallatin National Forest's 2006 Travel Plan brought with it an intense focus on road decommissioning to address excess road and water quality concerns. The need resulted from decades of land exchanges and acquisitions, proliferation of unauthorized user created routes, and excess project roads from harvest activities occurring in the 1960s to 1980s.



Using multiple funding mechanisms, primarily the Legacy Roads and Trails Program, 74 miles were decommissioned in the Gallatin Watershed in 2010, 26 miles in the Upper Shields River drainage in 2009 and 2010, 36 miles in the Hebgen Basin in 2009, and 63 miles in the Bangtail Mountain Range from 2006 to 2008.

In 2011 the forest intends to decommission 45 miles in the Bridger Mountain Range and 5 miles in Hebgen Basin around West Yellowstone.



Road decommissioning crews and contractors use many techniques including simply closing and tree slashing or installing rock barricades or buck and pole fences. In areas with significant erosion, roads are ripped, culverts removed, water barred, seeded and slashed. The most intensive treatments recontour hillside topography and drainage patterns to effectively erase roads from the landscape.

The decommissioning work has required considerable project specific internal and external public communication as road decommissioning is inherently complex and controversial.

The Gallatin Forest collaborated with Montana State University, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Wildland CPR and completed several Forest Travel Plan and water quality monitoring efforts to gauge the effectiveness of the road decommissioning. The results have been largely successful and have identified substantial water quality benefits and watershed improvement. Future Gallatin road work includes completion of travel plan intended decommissioning in the East Gallatin range, maintenance of existing closures, weed monitoring and treatments of decommissioned roads, and open road maintenance.

## Northern Region Pack Train Enters Year 23 of Service

---

By Dan Knudsen

2011 marks the twenty third year that the U.S. Forest Service Northern Region Pack Train will continue their work hauling freight in and out of wilderness, educating "Leave No Trace" wilderness management to the backcountry horse and stock communities, and representing the agency's mission and objectives at shows, expositions, and other events seen by nearly 100,000 people.



In 1988, Northern Region Regional Forester John W. Mumma reinstated the pack string program after decades of absence in order to educate members of the backcountry horse and stock communities to "Leave No Trace" backcountry philosophies as well as provide the Northern Region with a tool by which supplies and equipment could be transferred in and out of federally-protected wilderness areas. Previously, the U.S. Forest was heavily dependent upon mules and horses to achieve mission objectives, but changes over time had led to the dissolution of the program.

Since 1988, the ten mules and four riding animals of the Northern Region pack string have carried approximately 2.3 million pounds of supplies and equipment in and out of protected wilderness. They routinely carry items as large as 30-foot bridges, bear equipment, building construction and



maintenance equipment, and even gravel quietly at a 3 mile-per-hour pace.

When not working in the backcountry, the pack string, consisting of mules: Bart, Burt, Ruthie, Duchess, Rufus, Ernie, Kate, Tess, Palmer, and Sadie travel around the Pacific Northwest and even other parts of the country as the United States' only provider of "Leave No Trace" Master Educator

Training for stock. In addition to the pack string, four additional animals: Gracie, Dusty, Wiley, and a yet-to-be named paint horse round out the complement.

From their home at the Ninemile Ranger District on the Lolo National Forest, the ten mules and four riding animals will embark on a busy season hauling equipment, materials, and supplies as well as traveling to and from events, public appearances, and education events across the country. Their schedule began in Billings, MT on January 13, 2011 and will include 29 separate events ending October 7, 2011.

## **Back Country Horsemen Teach Free Wilderness Skills Weekend**

---

By Tod McKay

The Bitterroot Back Country Horsemen (BBCH) held their first-ever spring Wilderness Skills Weekend on May 21-22, at Charles Waters Campground on the Bitterroot National Forest.

The event was free to the public and classes included packing, Leave-No-Trace camping, "Be Bear Aware" training, backcountry hoof and veterinary care, using a GPS, setting up a backcountry kitchen and Dutch oven cooking.



BBCH was established more than 30 years ago and was one of the first chapters in the nation. Their goal is to ensure that stock users can continue to access backcountry and wilderness trails.

The club annually contributes over 600 personal hours and 425 stock hours on projects, most on the National Forest, that create significant benefits for all trail users and for the natural resources.

More photos are available at

**<http://www.flickr.com/photos/fsnorthernregion/collections/72157624486039218/>**



## **Local Partner's Efforts Lead to National Recognition**

---

Working in cooperation with the Lolo National Forest and the Northern Region Headquarters, two Trout Unlimited employees pulled together funding and support for top priority abandoned mine projects along with restoration-focused projects.

Outstanding achievements were put forth by Joe McGurrian and Rob Roberts of Trout Unlimited (TU) to increase the effectiveness of the Forest Service Fisheries and Aquatics program, which helped earn them a 2010 Partner Recipient for the Rise to the Future, National Hydrology and Soil Science Awards.



Working in cooperation with the Lolo National Forest and the Northern Regional Office, the two TU employees pulled together funding and support for top priority abandoned mine projects along with restoration-focused projects.

As an essential partner, Trout Unlimited garnered commitment from four different funding sources including: Montana Future Fisheries Program, TU's Embrace a Stream, National Forest Foundation and the Westslope Chapter of TU.

This demonstration of commitment allowed Lolo National Forest to focus efforts on top priority projects such as: Eustache Creek Abandoned Mine Reclamation Project, Middle Clark Fork Aquatic Habitat Improvement and Restoration and St. Louis Creek research along with upper main Ninemile habitat restoration.

The variety of these wide scale projects demonstrate the ability of TU to work on multiple levels and to maintain a vision for the larger-scale solution to mining and aquatic restoration needs in the middle Clark Fork River region.

## NRU Forum Explores Weathering Transition and Triumphanting

---

By Laura Churchman

Forest Service employees from around the Northern Region descended upon Missoula, Mont., and the University of Montana campus to attend Northern Region University (NRU), an annual weeklong training event, that was held April 4-8.



This year, NRU happened to take place during one of the more tumultuous weeks for the U.S. Forest Service and the federal government. It was the beginning of a week marked by upheaval – if Congress could not reach a compromise by midnight on Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup> to keep the federal government funded for the remainder of the fiscal year, federal employees faced a potential government shutdown.

The situation served as an unintended backdrop for this year's NRU Forum, "A Time of Change – Exploring Our Ability to Shift, Survive, and Thrive." The theme was decided upon by the NRU Forum planning team, comprised of NRU Director Kathy Engstrom, NRU Deputy Manager and Region 1 Smokejumper Enrique Olivares, UM Community and Professional Services (CPS) Director Bernadette Bannister, and CPS Technical Writer Laura Churchman.

The Forum's featured speaker, Twyman Towery, Ph. D., is the author of *Wisdom of Wolves – Leadership Lessons from Nature* and *The Power of Eagles – Nature's Way to Individual Accomplishment*.

An expert in organizational psychology, Dr. Towery was selected to engage the audience in a conversation about the dynamics of change within the agency.

By the afternoon of Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, just as the Forum was about to begin, managers and leaders across the Forest Service were preparing for the real possibility of a shutdown. Regional Forester Leslie Weldon made a commitment to attend the three-hour Forum and was in attendance to discuss the agency's very real challenges.

In order to address these specific challenges, Dr. Towery, a Tennessee native, took a crash course in the Forest Service before arriving in Missoula to speak. He spoke by phone with a sample of Forest Service employees, from smokejumpers to administrators, to learn as much as he could about the agency's culture, challenges, and accomplishments.

Dr. Towery began the Forum by acknowledging his own failures in life, noting that, without them, he never would have reached his successes. He assessed the general feeling of the audience, comprised of Northern Region employees from a variety of fields, and invited them into a dialog about themselves. How were they coping with constant change? How did they continue to meet the agency's standards and vision? Then he challenged them to always strive toward professional and personal success, in spite of an ever-changing work environment.

The natural world was a dominant theme throughout the Forum. Dr. Towery utilized the metaphor of a wolf pack and how they work together to achieve their goals. He also introduced the notion of permanent whitewater to the audience – a trend where obstacles and challenges are unrelenting – and how to stay afloat professionally when calm waters are nowhere in sight. Participants split into small groups for more intimate interaction and shared their insights on organizational behaviors with the group. Dr. Towery wrapped his presentation by sharing with the audience one of his greatest life challenges – his battle with throat cancer.

Audience feedback was positive, with evaluations reflecting such comments as, "I found the information increased my level of comfort with the prospect of constant change and shifting resources... I left feeling like change is normal, and successful change occurs when a person is actively involved and moving forward," and, "My biggest recommendation would be to figure out how to reach a larger FS audience."

The lessons learned through the 2011 NRU Forum speak more to opportunity than obstacle, more of champions than challenges. Change is a given. In fact, it is often the only certainty. This year's Forum and Dr. Towery allowed participants to look at change from a different perspective and to emerge from it a better professional and person.

NRU offers workshops, classes, certification courses and lectures on a wide range of topics for Forest Service employees at every level within the Northern Region. The NRU staff work directly with the Community and Professional Services team from the University of Montana, School of Extended & Lifelong Learning, who are under a contract with Region 1 to provide conference planning and management support to the Forest Service NRU planning team.

## **June Marks 10-year Anniversary for Accessible Electronic Information**

---

Tuesday, June 21, 2011, marked the ten-year anniversary of the Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973). Section 508 requires federal agencies' electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public. It establishes accessibility requirements for any and all electronic and information technology developed, maintained, procured, or used by the federal government.



For many of us, the office documents we create, along with federal government websites, are probably the two most visible forms of electronic communications we use; and, these communications have the greatest impact upon people, whether disabled or not.

As part of its commitment to the letter and spirit of the Rehabilitation Act, the Chief Information Office (CIO) called upon Dennis Lapcewich, Region 6 Forest Service webmaster, and member of the Agency's 508 Taskforce, to explain some of the basic issues that Forest Service employees need to know in the production and use of electronic information.

Lapcewich stated that Section 508 responsibility applies not only to webmasters such as himself, but every federal employee producing electronic information -- including email messages like the one sent to him asking for an interview.

"Every message, every Web page, and every document is required to be accessible to the disabled under Section 508," he explained. "At the same time the electronic and information technology tools we use to create those documents, send those emails, and communicate by other means, must also be accessible."

He was also quick to point out that the email he received was not accessible. The signature graphic used at the end of the email by this author did not include an alternative text tag that can be read by assistive technology used by people with visual, dexterity, and learning disabilities.

"Electronic information is easily made accessible with a few extra steps, but most federal employees do not realize they need to take these steps," Lapcewich said.

Section 508 does not require private companies to maintain accessible websites and technology products. The law only applies to federal agencies.

Lapcewich cited a few instances where the Forest Service fell short in meeting Section 508. In the early stages of the new Web portal, Lapcewich and his team were asked by the R6 Civil Rights office to conduct an accessibility review of the portal.

"That review, and several subsequent reviews by us, found the portal was not in compliance with Section 508. The reviews and recommendation resulted in the R6 Regional Forester issuing a memo directing no R6 public website could go live in the portal until our obligations to the disabled and the public under the law were satisfied," said Lapcewich. "Yes, we woke up a few people and stepped on a few toes at that point."

Lapcewich stated that to truly understand accessibility, a person has to walk in the shoes of a person with physical, learning, visual, audio, or perceptual disabilities. The applications used daily, such as Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat (full version), have the capability to create accessible documents.

"Having the correct tools to do a proper job is one thing. But knowing how to create accessible documents from those tools is quite another. I think annual mandatory accessibility awareness training is really needed," said Lapcewich.

Lapcewich wrote an article for the September 2010 issue of DR Data, the regular newsletter published by Region 6's Data Resources Management (<http://fsweb-drm.r6.fs.fed.us/administration/newsletters/dr-data/>). The article offers a detailed step-by-step guide on how to create an accessible Word 2007 document.

"Within days of publication, I had more than enough suggestions from people that I'm working on version two of the article, making it easier, simpler, and more to the point" he said.

Region 5 recently offered their own training session on how to create accessible documents with a focus not only on Microsoft Word, but also on creating accessible Acrobat PDFs. Lapcewich is working closely with the Region to write a set of simple instruction sheets on how to create accessible documents using the standard office applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Acrobat). "After a peer review, those instruction sheets should end up on the agency 508 Taskforce website as the single source for the agency," Lapcewich said. He thinks those instructions sheets will be on the 508 Taskforce website in a few weeks.

So how big is the need for electronic disability?

"During the 2000 Census, the Census Bureau asked people to self-identify if they were disabled or not. The Census revealed about 20 percent of the entire US population claimed disability. Mind you, disability at that time was understood to be physical disabilities. Section 508 did not exist at the time

and electronic communications we have today were nowhere as pervasive eleven years ago,” Lapcewich explained. “Even so, that translates to more than 50 million people self-identified as being disabled. If we keep the same 20 percent figure with our increased population now, we’re talking more than 60 million people self-identify as being disabled in America today.”

“But the realities of electronic disability make this a whole new ballgame. When we add in disabilities identified with electronic communications (visual, auditory, speech, dexterity, mobility, cognitive, and photo-sensitivity), the numbers are staggering. I did some raw number crunching the other day and found electronic disability may affect more than half of the entire US population. Being electronically disabled means you are in the majority, and not the minority in America. No one can ignore that. No one should ignore that, especially federal agencies. Those agencies that choose to ignore that fact, do so at their peril.”

Yet, while Section 508 spells out the requirements for accessibility, applying those requirements are not always cut and dry. It is just as important, if not more so, to meet the spirit of the law, as well as the letter of the law, according to Lapcewich.

“If a writer publishes an article with photographs on a website and creates alternative text (ALT text) for those photos that only say ‘photograph’ for each photo, the writer is meeting the letter of the law,” Lapcewich said. “But, is the writer really meeting the spirit of the law? If a picture truly is worth a thousand words, those who are visually impaired are at least 999 words less informed than someone who can really see the picture.”

Lapcewich added, “Accessibility does not take more time to design or cost more money to maintain. We think and act about accessibility at the beginning of every IT project, writing that first document draft, and during the initial design of a website. The Web was initially designed to be flexible, so why not work within the standards and construct websites that are accessible for the largest possible audience? The same applies to our Word documents, PowerPoint presentations, and so on.”

Lapcewich’s greatest hope is Forest Service employees become aware, through education and training, of ensuring electronic information is accessible. “Everyone needs to take a proactive role. Every federal employee has a professional and personal stake in electronic accessibility.”

Additional support of this responsibility for all employees to create accessible documents may be found in current efforts by the U.S. Access Board to update its standards for electronic and information technology, also known as “Section 508 Refresh.” An entire chapter in this update is oriented towards document authors, rather than technical developers.

"It is very important to present electronic information in a manner that ensures access by a diverse audience, regardless of disability or not. Ensuring that information is available to all really isn't about adherence to the law. It really is about human compassion, human decency, and human respect," Lapcewich concluded.

## Gallatin Forest Protection Officer Receives National Award

---

By Marna Daley

The Gallatin National Forest is pleased to announce that Brad Bolte, Forest Protection Officer on the Yellowstone Ranger District has received the national Forest Protection Officer of the year award. This prestigious honor is awarded annually to a Forest Service employee who exemplifies their dedication and commitment to serving the public while protecting our National Forests.



Brad is a Montana native, growing up and graduating high school from Shepherd, Montana in 2004. He attended Montana State University where he obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management in 2008. After graduating from MSU he came to work for the Gallatin National Forest where he has been an integral part of the Forest's recreation program.



This national award, offered by the Forest Service's Director of Law Enforcement & Investigations, recognized Brad's commitment to public education, enforcement, collaboration, and natural resource ethic. In addition, the award recognizes Brad's efforts associated with the grizzly bear maulings and fatality near Cooke City in July 2010.

"The Forest often receives compliments from partners and the public about Brad's professional demeanor and great attitude," said Mary Erickson, Forest Supervisor. "His continued and thoughtful presence has made Brad a fixture with the public and the small communities in southwest Montana that we serve by building trust and strengthening partnerships."

"I love my job. I enjoy working with people to help them understand Forest Service regulations and working outdoors. It is nice to work on the Gallatin Forest where most visitors are trying to do the right thing," said Bolte. "I am very grateful to the Forest Service and the Law Enforcement community for the recognition. Off the top of my head, I can think of several co-workers that deserve an award for their hard work. I am humbled to receive this honor for doing something I truly enjoy."





## Faces of the Region: Robin Boyd

---

Hi! I am Robin Boyd. I was born and raised on a ranch near Ronan Montana, with one sister and four brothers. When I was about fourteen years old I decided I had had enough of feeding cows in the cold of winter, and working on the ranch without, what I felt was adequate compensation. I was big enough then to ride my bike to Ronan and get a job.



I found a lot of part time work, mowing yards, gardening, janitorial, gas station work, and eventually the grocery store. I found out I liked working with people, rather than cows and it paid better. The recreation time, with money in the pocket, at Flathead Lake, took on a whole new dimension.

While attending high school I strived for good grades, and graduated as Salutatorian, class of around 100 students. I always liked sciences and math. I thought I would like to work for Fish and Game or for the Forest Service.

I went to college in Havre, Northern Montana College; there I discovered there was also a night life. I spent one year there studying zoology. I then went to Kalispell to Flathead Valley Community College, where I received an Associate Degree in Land Surveying.

After graduating from college in 1974, I was employed as a seasonal by the Talley Lake District, National Forest Service, surveying roads.

That winter I was offered a night job with Safeway Food and Drug. It paid 25 cents an hour more than the Forest Service and it was a 40 hour a week job with benefits. For the next 32 years I worked for Safeway, the last 30 years as a meat cutter and meat manager. I worked in approximately 20 stores the first ten years, and finished up the last twenty as meat manager in Dillon, Mt. I retired from Safeway, January 9, 2006.

Along the years with Safeway and moving around Montana I enjoyed time kayaking, bicycling, skiing, and other recreation activities. The turn of events in my life was when I started martial arts. I was living in Livingston, Mt. at that time. One night while watching the first Karate Kid movie, I thought, to myself that is what I should get into. Karate is good exercise, to get me in shape for skiing and kayaking.

In October of 1984, at the age of 31, I was on the phone to all the karate Dojang's in the Bozeman area. I settled on one, a kenpo style, kick boxing. I really enjoyed the classes, but in December

Safeway transferred me to Anaconda, Mont. There wasn't any Kenpo school there, only TaeKwonDo. I didn't care for it, it was too structured, and at the time I went to Anaconda it was time for skiing.

In the spring of 1985, with the encouragement of the Safeway produce manager, I joined the TaeKwonDo class. I struggled with the material and the discipline, but the produce manager kept me coming back.

As a white belt I went to the Butte Tournament, that fall, and after losing weight training for a lower weight classes, I found myself and five other guys in the heavy weight white belt division. I had five fights that day and was awarded the second place trophy. With cracked ribs and many bruises I felt I had found something I liked and would pursue. In October of 1985, Safeway transferred me to Dillon, Mt., where I spent the remaining of my time.

Dillon didn't have an active, organized TaeKwonDo school, just some people that would get together occasionally and train. On February 6, 1986, the instructor from Butte started an organized school for the Korean martial arts, TaeKwonDo, Hapkido, and Judo. I was one of 35 students that started and today I am the only one of those 35 still training in Dillon.

I took over the school as head instructor in January of 1990, as a brown belt, and received my first degree Black belt in August of 1991. I presently hold a Fifth Degree, Master, Black belt, in TaeKwonDo, a third degree in Hapkido, and a first degree in Judo.

The word "Do" in Korean means Way of Life, and the martial arts way has become my life, which is good. Martial arts are better than the night life I was involved and enjoyed so much.

I teach a variety of special groups of people. I even taught a self defense class for the office employees a few years ago at the Forest Service. I have taught many law enforcement officers self defense classes, sheriff, city, forest service, BLM, highway patrol, and city officers, as regular students.

Many times I was asked to join the ranks of the reserve law enforcement officers. I had spent so much of my time avoiding the cops, when I was younger, that I didn't think that would be a good idea. I didn't think like a cop. As time went on, they kept recruiting me, and I gave in.

In 2002, I became a reserve sheriff deputy, and am still very active today working for the Beaverhead County Sheriff department and along with that the Beaverhead Search and Rescue organization., as their training officer.

Through my training in the martial arts I found other activities were easier. I became involved with more outdoor sports such as mountain biking, kayaking, and skiing and snowboarding. Martial arts also brought me a family and family life I never had before.

In 1991, a lady brought her two boys to my martial arts school, and later joined the classes herself. That was how I met my wife Debe, who runs her own day care business in Dillon. She eventually went on to become a Second Degree black belt. The two boys are grown and doing well in Bozeman, Mont. With one grandson of four years old, who this year started skiing, and keeps grandpa and grandma very busy.

One day after I retired from working at Safeway, a friend and I were visiting a remote part of the back country with our jeeps. We were approached by a couple of men riding ATVs. I didn't know much about ATVs and their kind of riders. They asked us how we got our jeeps to where we were. I thought we were in trouble, and then they introduced themselves as the District Ranger and the head of recreation of the Dillon Ranger District.

A couple of weeks went by and I received a call and a job offer for an OHV Ranger position. I was glad to apply. I started the position as OHV Ranger in May 2008, and year will be my fourth season. Along with working as an OHV Ranger I have been able to work with a lot of great people that enjoy their work as well as work on a variety of projects.

In martial arts we talk about life making full circle, mine definitely has!

## **In Memoriam: James "Jim" Crockett**

---

Crockett, James "Jim" (4/30/27 - 2/21/2011)

Jim was born in Langdon, North Dakota and died Feb. 21, 2011, in Missoula. He attended the University of Idaho following a stint in the Navy at the end of World War II.

Jim was a smokejumper at McCall, Idaho in 1948, at Idaho City in 1949-50, back to McCall in 1951, and after a long hiatus he jumped from McCall from 1961 through 1965.

He served as the crew boss for the Bitterroot Hot Shots in the mid-1960s. Jim retired from the Bitterroot National Forest in 1982, but continued teaching new recruits each season for several years.

As a smokejumper, he accomplished the extraordinary feat of making three fire jumps in the same day.

## **Length of Service Awards in the Regional Office**

Regional Forester Leslie Weldon recently signed 25 Length of Service awards. Congratulations to the following employees, and thank you for your continued service!

### **40 years**

John T. Fields

### **30 years**

Bruce D. Crockett

Robert L. Quirino

Jane Cottrell-Henifin

Miguel E. Gomez

Steven Zachry

Eric E. Rajala

Maureen J. Kirchhoff

Joel A. Krause

### **25 years**

Angela K. Farr

Gary D. Boyd Jr.

Kristi S. Swisher

### **20 years**

Robert A. Elliott

### **15 years**

Julie B. Polutnik

Sondra F. Beach

### **10 years**

Jesse M. Myers

Jessica M. Johnson

David P. Stickler

Kevin B. Meekin

Andrew McKane IV

### **5 years**

Jimmie Powell Jr.

Leo J. Rauch

Ryan N. Theler

Deborah L. Jackson

Mark G. Pieper

## Beaverhead-Deerlodge Selects New Employees

---

Three new employees have recently been selected by the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. "We are fortunate to have found such great and highly qualified people to work for us," said Forest Supervisor Dave Myers. "I'm looking forward to working with them."



Cornelia "Cornie" Hudson has begun work as the new Ranger for the Dillon Ranger District. Hudson graduated from Utah State University with a BS in Forestry and began her Forest Service career on the Vernal Ranger District of the Ashley NF in Utah in 1981. She has since worked for the City of Salt Lake City, Utah Recreation Department, as well as the Salmon-Challis NF, Custer NF and most recently the St Joe Ranger District of the Idaho-Panhandle NF where she was a project planner and NEPA coordinator. Her experience varies from tree inventory, to timber sale administration, public affairs, fire, recreation and minerals management. Hudson replaces Tom Osen who transferred to the Clearwater-Nez Perce NF last fall.

Breck Hudson has been selected as the new Timber Management Officer for the BDNF. He began his career in 1985 working for the Pacific NW Range and Experiment Station in Quilcene, WA. He has since worked for the Bridger-Teton NF, Salmon-Challis NF, Custer NF and most recently the St Joe Ranger District of the Idaho Panhandle NF where he was responsible for the fire, silviculture, recreation and trails programs. He has worked in the timber program and as a Silviculturist, as well as a Fuels Specialist and Fire Management Officer. Breck replaces Dave Fletcher who retired this past winter. Breck is married to Cornie Hudson. They have two daughters Hailey who will be graduating from St Maries High School in June and attending Idaho State University this fall. Jessica will be attending Beaverhead County High School in the fall as a sophomore.



Shauna Smith has also begun work as the new Executive Assistant. Shauna will be working directly with the Forest Supervisor and Deputy Forest supervisor and brings a great depth of experience to the job. Smith, a Dillon native comes to the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF from the Lolo NF where she was a dispatcher. She graduated from University of Montana Western in Dillon, in 2000 with a BS in environmental science. Shauna was also a dispatcher for the Gallatin NF and the BLM in Cedar City, UT. Shauna enjoys horses, fishing, camping skiing and hunting; and is engaged to be married this summer.

## **Gallatin Avalanche Center receives Chief's Safety Group Award**

---

While in the midst of their 21<sup>st</sup> winter season, the employees at the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center received some much deserved recognition for their partnerships and impacts on safety they have made throughout the communities of southwest Montana.

The Gallatin Forest Avalanche Center had been awarded the Chief's Business Operations National Group Safety Award for 2010.

On March 7, 2011, Regional Forester Leslie Weldon and Regional Safety Manager Dave Goodin, as well as Gallatin Forest Supervisor Mary Erickson, recognized the GNFAC employees via videoconference.

The Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center (GNFAC) was recognized for exceptional contributions toward Forest Service employees and public safety. They have been proactive in providing critical safety and health benefits to employees and members of the public through avalanche awareness training and education, daily advisories, field site snowpack assessments, accident investigations, website updates and You Tube clips, and the publishing of scientific papers.

The education and engagement of forest winter recreational users by the GNFAC has made the National Forests of southwest Montana a much safer place to play. Group members are Doug Chabot, Eric Knoff, Mark Staples, Karl Birkeland, Jay Pape, and Dale Gullett.

## Region Engages in Safety Catalyst and Cadre Pilot

---

There is a growing buzz within the Forest Service building from the pilot engagement sessions, the Catalyst, Cadre 1 and Cadre 2 being held in the region are underway. This is the format for one day safety engagements that all employees will go to thru out the rest of the year. People's thinking about safety is being challenged and they are genuinely excited about the possibility of radically improved safety outcomes.

The NLC observed on their visits to other organizations with world class safety outcomes, each takes a corporate approach to safety – employing common language and systems. Over the past few months the learning to date to design and begin implementation of our one day all employee engagement workshops and identified high leverage investments that will make improvements in safety for further consideration by the NLC. In the coming months we will: (1) work to complete employee engagements, (2) in July conduct a safety learning workshop with invited experts and selected Forest Service colleagues. **The purpose of the workshop is to use our experience to date and the experiences of experts in the field of safety to inform our next steps** and (3) design and implement our Forest Service Safety System.

The NLC also has some Strategic Investments in Safety, the priorities identified by the NLC included:

- 1. Provide communication coverage for all employees (including volunteers) during the field season – during and after regular business hours.** A possible companion action – *“establishing a check-out/in policy with clear expectations regarding what to do when someone doesn't check-in put in place on every unit”* will be evaluated with this idea. This potential strategic investment in safety was one of the suggestions most frequently identified by employees.
- 2. Provide mandatory safety training for all new employees immediately after their hire.** This potential strategic investment in safety was also identified by multiple employees providing recommendations.
- 3. Make safety a core component of the agency leadership development programs.** This potential strategic investment in safety was also identified by multiple employees providing recommendations.
- 4. Train employees – and especially supervisors – in the principles of human performance improvement.** A possible companion action – *“invest in human performance improvement”* – will be evaluated with this idea. Both of these potential strategic actions were identified by multiple employees providing recommendations.



**5. Reward good safety results/establish an appropriate award program.** Another recommendation that included "*rewarding lessons-learned*" will be evaluated with this idea. Establishing an appropriate award program was among the most commonly identified potential strategic investments by employees.

**6. Make safety a more apparent part of the hiring and promoting/performance process.** This recommendation was one of the most frequently identified potential strategic investments in safety by employees.

## **North Dakota Geological Survey Earns Prairie Partner Award**

---

The U.S. Forest Service has awarded the North Dakota Geological Survey (NDGS) with the Prairie Partner Award for their work in helping to cooperatively manage the paleontological resources found on National Forest System (NFS) lands since 1986.

Their Memorandum of Agreement has resulted in paleontological inventories on the National Grasslands in North Dakota, educational fossil excavations with public participation, research studies of fossils discovered on NFS land, and establishment of exhibits where NFS fossils are displayed in the North Dakota Heritage Center and several other places in North Dakota.



The latest collaborative effort between the Dakota Prairie Grasslands (DPG) and the NDGS was the development of a fossil exhibit at the Bismarck Airport in Bismarck, N.D. The Bismarck Airport, a fairly new facility with exhibit space, plays a vital role to connect western and central North Dakota with the air transportation network. More than 190,000 people boarded planes through the Bismarck Airport in 2010 alone.

Larry Melvin, DPG Geologist, and John Hoganson, North Dakota State Paleontologist, approached Bismarck Airport Manager, Greg Haug, about establishing a fossil exhibit. Haug was enthusiastic about displaying the North Dakota fossils and the plan for an exhibit was approved by the City of Bismarck.

Phase I of the exhibit was completed in 2009, and featured a restored skull of a Triceratops from the 65-million-year-old Hell Creek Formation. The skull was discovered during one of the NDGS/DPG paleontological inventories in Slope County, N.D.

It was excavated by a crew of U.S. Forest Service, NDGS personnel and volunteers. The skull was restored in the NDGS Johnsrud Paleontology Laboratory at the North Dakota Heritage Center.

Other fossils exhibited from the Hell Creek Formation found on the Little Missouri National Grassland are other skeletal parts of Triceratops, a Tyrannosaurus rex tooth (cast), duck-billed dinosaur (Edmontosaurus) bones, parts of fish, turtle shell, conifer cones, dawn redwood leaves, and petrified wood.

The exhibit also includes fossils from Paleocene age rocks (60-55 million year old) found in the Little Missouri National Grassland in North Dakota. The Paleocene fossils in the exhibit include crocodile

teeth, scutes, and coprolites; champsosaur vertebrae and ribs; fish remains; freshwater clams and snails; and leaves and seeds.

Phase II, the final phase of the exhibit, was completed in February 2011. Three skeletons (casts) of the flying reptile Pteranodon, were suspended from the 40-foot-high airport ceiling. The skeletons were positioned above the case containing the Triceratops skull and other fossils. These flying reptiles have wing spans of 20 feet and had soared along the coast line in North Dakota hunting for fish. Pteranodon lived at the same time as Triceratops, Tyrannosaurus rex, and other dinosaurs about 65 million years ago.

These exhibits are examples of true partnership, and educate thousands of people about the rich paleontological resources found on the Little Missouri National Grasslands. The DPG nominated the North Dakota Geological Survey for the Prairie Partner Award in recognition of its outstanding contributions and partnership in promoting North Dakota's paleontological treasures.

## Watershed Condition Framework Rolls Out Across Nation

---

On June 3, 2011, Secretary Vilsack announced the release of a series of new maps that characterized the health and condition of the National Forest System (NFS) lands in more than 15,000 watersheds across the country.

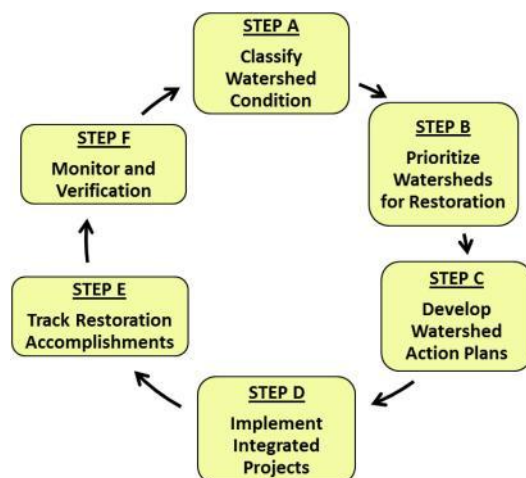
The series of Watershed Condition Classification Maps is the first step in the agency's six step Watershed Condition Framework and is the agency's first national assessment across all 193 million acres of NFS lands.

"Watershed restoration is not new to the Forest Service, but we now have new capabilities to assess and prioritize where resources are needed most," said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. "For the first time, we are laying out a process to allow data from local assessments to be collected, analyzed and evaluated to better understand existing conditions and the specific needs for restoration and maintenance at the national level."

As part of a nationwide effort, interdisciplinary teams comprised of aquatics specialists and hydrologists, soil scientists, fire science specialists, botanists, forest health specialists, silviculturalists, range management specialists and others evaluated attributes for more than 15,000 watersheds.

For every watershed, a simple score card approach was executed based on a core set of 12 nationally consistent physical and biological indicators. Watersheds were then classified into one of three classes.

A breakout of each region has been developed along with an overall national map. The capacity to "drill-down" and view sixth-level watersheds or sub-watersheds is forthcoming.



With step A (classification) complete, the agency is beginning implementation of the next steps of the Framework.

To learn more contact R1 lead: Meredith Webster at [mmwebster@fs.fed.us](mailto:mmwebster@fs.fed.us) or at 406-329-3412 or Bruce Sims at [bsims@fs.fed.us](mailto:bsims@fs.fed.us) at 406-329-3447.

## **Northern Rockies Montessori Offers Childcare for Missoula-area Employees**

---

By Jessie Thomas

After two years, a group of Forest Service employees at the Missoula Fire Science Technology and Development Center have reached their goal of creating a Montessori school for Missoula-area employees.

The project started when the group became interested in finding solutions to the obstacles presented with having childcare needs with many non-standard working schedules.

After learning how the Forest Service allows such a program to operate, the group formed an association and has since contracted the services of a Montessori program director. Through a short-term grant from Fire and Aviation Management the group was able to get enough funding for start-up costs.

Since June 2011, Northern Rockies Montessori is fully operational providing employees with quality on-site childcare for infants, toddlers, and 3-6 year olds.

"We are very encouraged by the amount of support and enrollment we have received thus far," says Jessie Thomas, of the Missoula Smokejumpers. "We will continue to grow and change as the needs of the people grow and change."

If you have further questions on how this program operates or what steps to take if you are interested in beginning a program at your facility, please contact Jessie Thomas at [\*\*jessicathomas@fs.fed.us\*\*](mailto:jessicathomas@fs.fed.us).

## **Region Takes On Master Agreement, Positive Work Environment Training**

Negotiations are complete, and the new Master Agreement between the Forest Service and the National Federation of Federal Employees-Forest Service Council (NFFE-FSC) is now in effect as of October 25, 2010.

This agreement covers all NFFE bargaining unit employees and remains in effect for three years unless otherwise agreed to by the National Parties.

A training session for the new Master Agreement was held for Labor Relations representatives and Union officials last October. These individuals were tasked with jointly delivering Master Agreement training throughout the Forest Service to their respective areas.

The cadre for the Master Agreement/Positive Work Environment training for the region has been going strong since Northern Region University and have powered through the month of June. For the union, Carolyn Snyder from Local 1241 on the Flathead National Forest and Gerry Ann Howlett of Local 1295 on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest have been working with Skip Hegman to get this done across the region.

This training is mandatory for every bargaining unit employee and every manager who supervises a bargaining unit employee. Those who haven't attended may contact Hegmen for times and locations.

Ron Angel the Council Vice President for Region 1, and with the assistance of John Olson of Local 1295, has been trying to help organize the Custer and the Gallatin National Forests

Angel has taken the lead nationally in an attempt to get multiple fire positions into the bargaining unit and under the umbrella of the Master Agreement contract as allowed by law. He says negotiations are going well and he is optimistic that this will happen soon.

Any employee that has an issue that they feel is of a regional magnitude that they want the Region 1 Partnership Council to discuss they should contact one of the members to get it brought forward. The members are Ron Angel, John Olson, Carolyn Snyder, Ellen Sullivan, Debbie Cuyle, Tom Schmidt, Paul Bradford, Amber Kamps, Skip Hegman, and Sandy Abbott. Their next meeting is scheduled in July.

## Update from the 2011 Montana Legislature

---

By John Hagengruber

On January 3, the 62nd session of the Montana legislature convened for almost 90 days until adjourning by invoking “sine die” (a Latin term which essentially means that they’ve finished their work).

Unlike some states legislatures where lawmakers are paid year-round and may even have their own staff to help craft bills and respond to constituents, Montana has a largely unpaid citizen legislature with a small group of shared staff to assist with drafting bills. In addition to some of the most prominently discussed issues (i.e. state budget, education, medical marijuana, workers’ compensation, etc.), there was a high level of interest in natural resources and federal lands during session.

Leading up to, and during session, a total of 2246 bills were drafted, of which 1179 were actually introduced in either the House or Senate. In the interest of brevity, this update will focus only on a limited number of bills which successfully became law.

**Fire:** New laws will prevent local government from denying a subdivision development proposal solely on it being located in the wild-land urban interface, exempt emergency wells used by local fire departments from permitting requirements, and eliminate the maximum age cap for application for firefighter positions in Montana. Finally, an interim study was approved by the legislature which will largely focus on local and state-level fire protection issues.

**Wildlife:** Bills related to wolves made up the lion’s share of wildlife-related legislation, with most of them attempting to increase the state’s ability/authority to actively manage Montana’s wolf population. Several bison-related bills were passed which could provide the framework for the development of a management plan for free roaming bison (with agency requirements for public participation). Several new laws will revise state policy with regard to grizzly bears and authorize the Fish, Wildlife and Parks commission to establish hunting season quotas for grizzly bear in Montana.

**Recreation/Access:** Relatively few recreation-related bills were passed. However, an interim study to examine the state parks, recreation and heritage programs (including whether these programs should be located in a different agency than FWP – possibly Montana Department of Commerce) was approved.

**State sovereignty:** A resolution to Congress was passed regarding federal land use policy (emphasizing the importance of extractive uses of federal lands, advocating for adequate funding of

federal environmental review processes, and calling for a limit on the amount of federal land that is closed to development).

**Water:** A river of bills worked their way through the legislature regarding water & water rights. The legislature authorized Montana Department of Environmental Quality to consider the use of petroleum mixing zones when dealing with fuel storage tanks. MT DEQ was also given the flexibility to address the issue of total maximum daily loads by regulating them at a watershed level (versus waterway-by-waterway) also became law. A bill which will require an interim study of exempt water wells (such as those which are typically used for single family homes) became law.

**Timber/biomass:** In a bill that moved through the process as quickly as any bill of the session, the legislature reduced/eliminated applicable state air quality regulations for mobile forestry equipment (chippers, grinders, air curtain burners, etc.). Other bills which became law will establish an annual Montana Forest Products Industry Week in October, and require the use of Montana-made wooden products in road/highway projects when it proves feasible.

**Lands/Energy/Mining:** The revision of existing eminent domain laws played out until after the legislative session adjourned, with the Governor allowing the legislature's bill to become law without his signature. Other new laws will amend the Major Facility Siting Act with regard to the width of the prospective corridor that is analyzed under state law and encourage the use of existing corridors wherever possible before new ones are designated. A new mining law will authorize the issuance of a draft permit to facilitate the proponent's ability to obtain funding. A resolution to Congress urging additional oil and gas leasing on federal lands was also passed.

**Planning:** Laws were passed to streamline the environmental analysis process for the state's snowmobile grant program, encourage greater involvement in federal land planning processes by the Montana Department of Commerce, and revise the state's Montana Environmental Policy Act in large part by establishing sideboards on the extent of the environmental analysis.

**Invasives:** New laws will strengthen the existing weed laws by requiring faster compliancy by landowners as well as provide for fines, liens, and court orders for noncompliance. In addition, existing aquatic invasive species laws were revised and strengthened, with DNRC being added to the list of funded agencies.

**Climate change:** Bills ran the gamut of positions with regard to climate change, from asserting that climate change was beneficial to Montana to proposing a study on the potential benefits of terrestrial carbon sequestration. However, the only legislative items which passed were a resolution asking Congress to prevent the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from regulating greenhouse gases, and



a law which requires monitoring of carbon dioxide injection wells for a time period (50 years) in order to comply with federal regulations.

Many more bills died during session than those discussed in this article which became law. For more information, visit [http://laws.leg.mt.gov/laws11/LAW0217W\\$BAIV.return\\_all\\_bills](http://laws.leg.mt.gov/laws11/LAW0217W$BAIV.return_all_bills) or contact John Hagengruber at 439-0225.

## **R1/RMRS Team Earns Top Spot in Commuter Challenge**

---

By Mariah Leuschen

Spring arrived in Missoula and Forest Service employees from across the city took to the streets. As part of the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Bike Walk Bus Week and sponsored by Missoula in Motion, employees joined together with close to 2,500 Missoula in Motion members from May 1-7, 2011 to raise awareness and reward commuters who choose sustainable transportation options for their daily commute to work.



Each year businesses and organizations are divided by size and type and during a week-long celebration, Bike Walk Bus Week; the number of staff participating in sustainable commuting options is tracked.

Of the participating businesses the USDA Northern Region Forest Service/Rocky Mountain Research Station Human Dimensions earned first place in large public agencies. The work doesn't end after one week, for many the commuter challenge is a yearly individual promise to health and fitness.

Weekly, the non-profit, Missoula in Motion tallies the commuting miles and CO2 saved. Since January 2011, in the biking category alone members have tracked 81,420 miles saving 49.67 tons of CO2. Walking, busing, carpooling, vanpooling and telecommuting are all tracked.

Thank you to the following 2011 Commuter Challenge participants:

Cathy Stewart  
Jolyn Ortega  
Brandan Schulze  
Jim Wickel  
Krista Gebert  
Jonathan Haber  
Matt Thompson  
Jody Miller  
Mariah Leuschen  
Flint Buchman  
Jody Bramel

Jeff Kaiden  
Kurt Krueger  
Will Pedde  
David Calkin  
Joan Louie  
Jessica Haas  
Mike Oliver  
Matthew Wibbenmeyer  
Keith Stockmann  
Brian Rafferty

## **Employees to be Surveyed on Workplace Satisfaction**

---

Ensuring that employees of the U.S. Forest Service Northern Region are happy and satisfied in the roles they perform is a primary mission of both regional and senior agency management. Happy and satisfied employees enjoy what they do and feel valued and empowered within their roles and responsibilities. Recent Federal employee surveys have illustrated that for some; there may be areas of opportunity within the agency to build value into the personnel experience.

In order to accomplish this mission and ensure that region and senior management are aggressively working to ensure the highest levels of satisfaction for everyone, the Northern Region is set to begin a working collaboration with employees throughout the region to gain valuable insight and feedback necessary to improve the process. Every attempt will be made to reduce the impact to region employees randomly selected to participate.

Beginning in the summer of 2011, randomly selected non-senior management employees from throughout the region will be asked to participate in a series of questions that make-up a base-line survey. This survey is designed to identify the point where valuable work building employment and experience begin for each participant. Those selected can be assured that their participation, feedback, and comments will be fully anonymous in nature and will be collected and reviewed by an outside party to ensure that participants feel empowered to share and collaborate. Participants will receive an email indicating what is being asked of them and how the process will begin.

Building a working framework by which the agency can learn and adapt is essential to moving toward a desired outcome.

Caring for the land and serving the people also incorporates a critical piece: to care for those great folks who do the amazing work and to ensure employees are working together to provide the highest level of positive employment experience.

The hard work everyone does is much appreciated. Thank you in advance for those selected to participate and know that you will help make working for the U.S. Forest Service Northern Region the experience we all want and need it to be.

## National Museum of Forest Service History Coming to Missoula

---

Over the course of the Forest Service's first century, there has never been one central repository where artifacts could be stored, preserved and displayed. There has not been one central exhibition hall where the stories and lessons could be shared with the public. And there has not been one central monument where the leaders, partners, and people whose stories are our history could be recognized and honored.



Architectural rendering of the National Museum of Forest Service History building. The rendering includes the text "National Museum of Forest Service History" and "The legacy of the Forest Service, today and tomorrow." along with logos for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Museum of Forest Service History.

Until now.

In 2009, the National Museum of Forest Service History (NMFSH) board announced plans to build the National Conservation Legacy and Education Center in Missoula, Mont. The NMFSH is a nonprofit institution that serves to manage, protect, and interpret the more than 100 year history of the Forest Service for decades to come.

The mission of the museum is to support education, research, and furthering understanding of conservation in the United States and the world. The Museum works with the Forest Service, state agencies, non-profit organizations and natural resource based businesses to achieve their mission.

The Museum is in the planning stages to become a Smithsonian Institution affiliate and is undertaking a major fund raising campaign to develop the Museum facility itself.

The NMFSH is currently focused on:

- 1) Construction of the National Conservation Legacy and Education Center facility that will provide interactive and educational interpretive exhibits, a repository for historical objects, classrooms and offices;
- 2) A national conservation education program;
- 3) Traveling exhibits;
- 4) Development of online archives and a virtual museum.

The building is planned to be located adjacent to the Missoula Technology and Development Center at the Missoula Airport. Historical artifacts will be featured in the Center's interpretive interactive exhibits.

More than 40,000 artifacts in the care of the NMFSH date from the mid-19th century to today and provide a tangible connection to the objectives, activities, and roles of the Forest Service throughout the agency's history. Approximately half of the artifacts in the Museum's collection are Forest Service owned.

A Forest Service ranger station and lookout are already located at the museum site. The museum staff is available to provide tours of the site to the public.

Recently the NMFSH Board of Directors approved the formation of a panel of historians to advise the board. The panel is chaired by Patricia Limerick, Ph.D., Center of the American West. Lincoln Bramwell, Ph.D., Chief Forest Service Historian is an ex-officio member. Twelve other nationally recognized historians are members of the panel.

For more information, visit the NMFSH website is **[www.nmfs-history.net](http://www.nmfs-history.net)**.

## Forest Service 2012 Reunion Update

---

The site of the 2012 Forest Service Reunion will be in Vail, Colo., at the Vail Mountain Marriott and the dates will be September 17-21, 2012.



Meetings and lodging will be in the main reunion hotel, the Vail Marriott Mountain Resort and Spa at Lionshead Square. Room rate will be \$109 plus tax for all rooms.

The rate for these rooms was negotiated down just for our Reunion attendees.

Depending upon final attendance numbers, the option is in place for the same rate quote at three other hotels within just a hundred yards of the Marriott. There will be room for all who want to experience this great opportunity to reconnect with friends at the 2012 Forest Service Reunion, but when registration opens for the hotel this fall. We encourage folks to register early.

Hotel reservations can be made any time after October 1, 2011. Conference registration will begin on February 1, 2012, and to ensure early registration and guaranteed reunion hotel rates, you will need to register for both before June 15, 2012.

There are ADA accessible rooms available.

The following link provides very specific information about the Vail Mountain Marriott:  
<http://vailmarriott.com>.

To stay abreast of the latest happenings and opportunities bookmark us at <http://fsreunion2012.com>

## **Past, Present Lolo Forest Employee Rendezvous**

---

It has been years (if ever) since the Lolo National Forest has had a reunion. Do you work for the Lolo? Have you ever worked for the Lolo? If so, you and your family are invited to an afternoon/evening of getting together to eat and visit with current and former Lolo employees. No program is planned.

**WHERE:** Fort Missoula Historical Museum Grounds, Missoula, Mont.

**WHEN:** From 4:00 to 9:00 on September 16, 2011.

**COST:** \$5.00 per person

Bring your favorite dish to share, whatever you like to drink, and a lawn chair. The committee will provide plates, utensils, and napkins.

RSVP by letting one of the folks below know if you can make it:

Linda Benton – linda<at>fstewartfinancial.com - 541-3733

Becky Stensrud – beekystensrud<at>bresnan.net - 258-5395

John Anderson – meerkat.john<at>gmail.com - 721-6064

Milo McLeod – caywoodmcLeod<at>montana.com - 549-6287

Marcia Hogan – marcialhogan<at>aol.com - 728-6387

## **Just in Time for Summer Season: The 2nd Annual NRU Photo Unit Challenge**

---

By Laura Churchman

Last year during the 2010 Northern Region University Forum, three employees from Region 1 were recognized by Regional Forester Leslie Weldon for their photography and documentation skills that captured aspects of the Forest Service in the Northern Region.

**Alex Brooks**, wildland fire module leader, won the "People" category for his photo of a hotshot firefighter during a lull in the Coyote Fire on the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge in Montana.

**Christine Romero**, public affairs specialist for Region 1 and the Boise National Forest in Missoula, won the "Places" category for her photo "Wildflower Paradise" shot on Daisy Pass in the Gallatin National Forest near Cooke City, Montana.

The "Past" category winner was **Regina Clark**, range management specialist, Bozeman District, Gallatin National Forest. Her photo was of Indian Ridge on the Hellroaring Divide in the Spanish Peaks Wilderness Area south of Bozeman. That photo was judged along with an historic photo taken in the same spot.

This year, Region 1 is sponsoring NRU Photo Unit Challenge once again. Region 1 employees are encouraged to grab their cameras and start documenting their work. As the summer season approaches, this is a perfect time to begin capturing the moments in your daily work life and perhaps impart this particular moment in time to future generations of the Forest Service.

Submissions to the Photo Unit Challenge are **due September 15, 2011**. The three entry categories are:

**Employees at Work in the Field:** Photographs should show our employees performing their work – whatever that work may be (constructing trail, surveying, firefighting, operating equipment, training others, tree climbing, saddling pack stock, etc.)

**Employees Safely at Work:** Photographs will show safe practices being carried out/demonstrated by Forest Service employees – on the ground, in and around vehicles, using equipment, in the office, etc.

**Forests for People:** The United Nations General Assembly declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests to raise awareness of sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest. The aim is to celebrate people's action to sustainably manage the world's forests. The category "Forest for People" was included to honor this international movement. Your



documentation will support your entry when you describe why you chose a particular photo for this category. For ideas on photographs that would fit this category go to this website:

<http://www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011/>

For official rules and entry forms, go to [www.unt.edu/ce/cps/nru](http://www.unt.edu/ce/cps/nru)

### Awards and Recognition

The winner in each category will receive an archive-quality, professionally framed print of their photo and documentation description. Winners will be notified by September 30, 2011. Recognition and presentation of the framed photos will be scheduled during NRU week 2012. More details about the award presentation to come.

In the meantime, start taking photos and make your mark on Forest Service historical documentation.



CHALLENGE-EXTENDED-UNTIL  
SEPTEMBER-15, 2011

PHOTO UNIT CHALLENGE

Forest Service  
Historical  
Documentation

We are extending the Photo Unit Challenge to encourage stronger participation and to include photos taken over the upcoming summer season. Please remember to take and document your photos this year and enter to win.

Photo categories include:

- Employees at Work in the Field
- Employees Safely at Work
- Forests for People

Winning entrants will be recognized at NRU 2012.

Find out more and enter now by going to <http://www.unt.edu/ce/cps/nru/>

DEADLINE  
SEPTEMBER-15TH

SPONSORED-BY-THE-US-FOREST-SERVICE,-REGION-1,-NORTHERN-REGION-UNIVERSITY (NRU)

## **Send Us Your Ideas, Suggestions, and Feedback**

---

Northern Region News is back and we need your help to keep it going and continue to make it better. Do you have suggestions on things the newsletter could regularly highlight?

Northern Region News is a quarterly online newsletter, and the next release date is scheduled for September 28, 2011. Please have any articles submitted by September 23. If you have any ideas for stories, please send them along. You can send your suggestions to **[bschulze@fs.fed.us](mailto:bschulze@fs.fed.us)**.